HARAMBEE

FLAME

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Introduction

Beginning on the following page, "Back In Time" will spotlight some important events, developments, and people which and whom contributed to the making of the richness of the history of our people, African people. It is significant that, at this very time, discussion is being intensely held throughout the U.S. on the question of what we African folks in America should call ourselves/ what we should be called. Even the grand apologist for the Democratic Party, Jesse Jackson, is calling upon us to move from reference to ourselves as "blacks" to reference to ourselves as "African-Americans." This is certainly a step in the right direction. "Black" is, afterall, nothing but a color. Referring to ourselves as "blacks" is equivalent to referring to ourselves as "broads." How so? Is not "black" but a shortened form of "black skin"? Do we not, characteristically, have broad noses? Yes, "African" makes sense because our ancestors came from a particular place, Africa. But while "African-American" is a step in the right direction, it yet does a faulty job of defining us. It does denote the fact that we have a dual heritage, the African and the American. And it is a useful term for identifying African people born here as opposed to, for example, African people in Africa. However, the term suggests a kind of kinship to and identification with America. This is a problem because America is stolen land, land taken from its indigenous population. By thinking of ourselves as "African-Americans," don't we implicitly accept as legitimate the theft of this land from Native Americans? America is also a political entity, one which was responsible for our importation here as slaves and for hundreds of years(including the present) of our oppression and, along with Europe, responsible for the ongoing theft of the resources of Africa. These are issues which we must include in our discussions about who we are. Nevertheless, our presentation of "Back In Time" talks about us, Africans all. We hope you find it interesting.

Back In Time

What We've Been Called/What We've Called Ourselves

..."During the late 1700s and 1800s, many free black organizations used the term African to make plain the gap between their debased American identity and their lost origins. The Free African Society, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Masonic African Lodge, the African Free Schools, and the African Clarkson Society are examples of organizations that proudly emphasized their African roots.

"The tide turned against that overt identification with the mother continent during the 1830s when pro-slavery interests mounted vigorous, well-funded campaigns to convince free blacks to return to Africa. Groups like the American Colonization Society alleged that blacks were inherently incapable of living among European-Americans as anything but slaves and thus, they argued, free blacks were more suited for life in Africa. This transparsnt attempt to bolster the institution of slavery provoked blacks to assert their identities as 'colored' Americans in reaction. 'Colored' fell out of favor following the abolition of slavery and black leadership settled on the term 'negro'.

..."As the 20th century approached, black Americans found themselves under attack physically as well as academically; racial lynchings had become the rage during the 1880s and 1890s as thousands of mostly southern blacks were murdered.

"This wanton violence sparked a huge northward migration, and groups like the Afro-American Council were formed on the platform of racial solidarity and self-help. Again, an open acknowledgement of African roots seemed to characterize the thinking of many black leaders and theorists. Marcus Garvey's pan-Africanist movement virtually embodied

this sentiment...The Jamaican-born black nationalist saw no conflict in naming one of is groups the Universal Negro Improvement Association, another the African Communities League and yet another the Black Cross Nurses. Garvey considered the capitalized term 'Negro' an honorable label for people of African descent.

"The artistic movement dubbed the Harlem Renaissance was focused on the emerging identity of the 'new Negro': a cosmopolitan sophisticate with one foot planted in the European canon and the other in the artistic traditions of the African diaspora. Although various publications, some scholars and activists continued using terms like 'black' and 'Afro-American', the term Negro became the preferred label.

"It remained that way until the late '60s, when the Black Power Movement ushered the word 'black' into common usage. By proudly adopting a label traditionally deemed negative, black Americans sought to subvert European culture's seemingly omnipotent power of definition. It was an aggressive assertion of black America's ability to name itself..."

-From "African-American: What's In A Name" by Salim Muwakkil in the Jan. 25-31 IN THESE TIMES(Chicago).

From Seats Of Authority to Mastery Of Farming

"During the first millennium B.C., the Ethiopians of the Sudan gained control of Egypt. In 751 B.C. the Kushite warrior, Pianky, again subdued the country and started a hundred-year reign of black rulers. Through Egypt, the land of Kush controlled territory from the Mediterranean to the edge of modern Ethiopia. Perhaps the greatest of these black rulers was Taharka who assumed supreme power in the 'cradle of civilization' in 688 B.C....In

670 B.C., the Ethiopians were driven from the land and retired to the black capitals of Napata and Meroe. Napata was a famous Kushite center for the worship of the sun god, Amun, while Meroe was the first known commercial iron-producing settlement in history. One of the most outstanding rulers in the area of Napata and Meroe was Metekamane, who built great monuments to himself and his queen, Amanetari, along the western side of the Nile and on Argo Island...

"The blacks of Africa did more than help construct tombs and monuments. They pioneered, along with the Hittites, in the making of iron, the working of gold and silver, and in the use of oil-bearing plants for medicinal and dietary purposes, especially palm oil. They developed basic cereals, including several kinds of millet and rice. They took the wild plant Gossypium herbaceum and evolved it into the world's first cotton cloth, and from its fibers developed the art of weaving. The blacks of Africa are believed to have been the world's first farmers, producing wheat, groundnuts, gourds, kola, and possibly coffee and cress, as well as yams, watermelons and peanuts..."

-From p. 1 of GREAT NEGROES PAST AND PRESENT
by Russell L. Adams

Origin Of The Book Of Proverbs

..."by Professor Breasted in the classic, DAWN OF CONSCIENCE: 'The publication of papyrus...in the British Museum,...revealed the author...Amenenope! All old Testament scholars of any weight or standing now recognize the fact that this whole section of about a chapter and a half of the Book of Proverbs is largely drawn verbatim from the Wisdom of Amenenope; that is the Hebrew version is practically a literal translation from the Egyptian. (Cont. on p. 11)

FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.) is a pan-Africanist newsletter. This means that the FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any artificial distinction between African people based solely on place of birth. Therefore, references to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter the terms used therein to fit our editorial policy.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa(aka David Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems that make effective use of imagery, that have beauty and power, and do not sacrifice such for sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme.

Send submissions to: HARAMBEE FLAME
Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org.
Attn: Editor/Mondo
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE 68502-0500

From Other Sources

Behind The Scenes Of The Miami Insurgency

..."Since 1980, Miami's Black community has seen Spanish-speaking Mariel Cubans and now Nicaraguan refugees warmly welcomed here and offered food, shelter and jobs, while Blacks have been left out of the city's economic growth.

"Recently arrived Black Haitian refugees have been treated very differently by the INS(Immigration & Naturalization Service). Most travel to the U.S. on small boats that are constantly interdicted by the U.S. Coast Guard resulting in their immediate return to Haiti. Those who do make it to the U.S. are thrown into the Krome Ave. Detention Center just west of Miami and are routinely denied political asylum and deported.

"Recent accusations of INS abuse of Haitian prisoners in the camp have further heightened the contrast between the treatment of Haitians and Nicaraguans. While Nicaraguans are offered jobs and housing, Haitians that do get out of Krome suffer the same discrimination and poor living conditions as their African-American neighbors..."

-Above passages excerpted from "Blacks Again Rebel Against Miami Racism," which appears on pages 1 and 6 of the Feb. 1 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y.).

Africans In N.Y. Organize To Combat Crack

"Sonny Carson is president of a group called Black Men's Movement Against Crack, a Brooklyn-based group devoted to strong-arming the crack epidemic out of the African-American community. Carson is a veteran of the black movement whose transformation from gang leader to community organizer was

depicted in the cult film 'The Education Of Sonny Carson'...

"'Crack is the most vicious weapon ever mounted against us', Carson explains...Our organization, Black Men's Movement Against Crack, has one motto: death to all crack dealers. And believe me, brother, we're dead serious'...

"Carson says that when he first started the anti-crack group the response was large, but support has subsequently dwindled. Several observers attribute that to Carson's intemperate tendencies. He says it's because most black males have forgotten how to act like men. We've been relegated to the bottom of the heap for so long we've forgotten what it means to take responsibility for our communities. We've ceded them to our enemies...'"

-Above passages excerpted from "Controversial Black Leader Battles Against Crack," which appears on p. 3 of the Feb. 1-7 IN THESE TIMES.

NAACP Image Awards Show Criticized

"One should view the NAACP IMAGE Awards Show aired on NBC, not only as a joke, but as an insult to the communities and to the struggle, just the thought of giving awards to people who have little or no track record in the struggle--Eddie Murphy receiving two awards, for what? Cash or a check? Clint Eastwood gained more applause than Jesse Jackson preaching keep hope alive please, put in another tape, Jesse. The NAACP Awards Show sends a signal not only to the black communities but to the world community. That signal being we have made it in America. Not only can we sing and dance for American; now we can sit with ole master and escort his daughters. The NAACP Awards program was just a show and tell talent showcase--strutting house n___s and grinning Aunt James...

"Not one thing about this program dealt with human or civil rights as a movement and its historical values...

"The NAACP Image Awards Program is a joke, once giving Prince the award. Does Prince have a positive image? Photographs nude, projects an anti-male image. And yet he received this honor at the expense of our forefathers' and mothers' struggle ..."

-Above passage excerpted from "The NAACP Image Awards: A Concerned Viewer's Response," which appears on pp. 6 and 10 of the Jan. 28 MILWAUKEE COURIER.

Grassroots Organizing In Haiti

"Since the all of the Duvalier regime, U.S. mainstream press coverage of Haiti has focus d on coups, massacres and, especially, elections. But tbe bloodstained electoral exercises have been paralleled by a vital process the media has largely ignored--the burgeoning of popular grassroots organizations.

Despite the extreme repression, these peasant, worker and community groups have flourished...

"One of the most representative organizations in this growing grassroots sector is the National Popular Assembly(APN), which has been centrally involved in the mass actions of the last several months...

"...APN is a secular organization that motivates its members through community empowerment and the building of class consciousness...

"APN has established a national network of over 60 Local Popular Assemblies(APLs) and set up primary schools, peasant cooperatives, technical training workshops, rural health clinics and classes in

agronomy.

"One of APN's most important projects is the Peasant Movement of Milot(MPM), which has led 2000 peasants to repossess over 330 acres of preciously fertile farmland in northern Haiti...

"Two days after the new MPM occupied the land and began planting crops, the army attacked, shooting two peasants to death and wounding many others. The peasants have remained, however, growing food for their own consumption as well as a few cash crops...

"Another APN project is a rural health clinic that serves the northern community of Au Borgne. Here, a doctor visits the APN infirmary once every two weeks to treat and advise the residents. An ambitious APN project in the southern community of Torbeck teaches 250 children daily in a primary school built and run solely by the organization's members...

"The APN has established women's training programs and female-run cooperatives, in which APN seeks to involve the 'Madame Saras', the Haitian market women who traditionally dominate the commerce of the rural peasant economy...

"The APN and other popular organizations have been working to unite in the face of...repression. Several groups have held conferences and debates aimed at forging a unified national front. They acknowledged that their work is slow and painstaking and may not show big results for some time. But leaders like Pierre-Louis say it is this grassroots approach that will make the difference in Haiti's future."

U.S. Downing Of Libyan Fighters: An Untold Story

..."Given the rising crescendo of threats from

Washington in recent weeks, the Libyans had every reason to believe another bombing attack was imminent. A second aircraft carrier(in addition to the Kennedy), appropriately named the 'USS Theodore Roosevelt', was heading for the Mediterranean. Moreover, in a little-noticed admission, the Pentagon has stated that U.S. fighter-bombers were 'engaged in bombing practice Wednesday 70 miles off the coast of Libya--dropping smoke bombs and then performing bombing runs on the columns of smoke--when two Libyan MiG-23 fighters were detected'(SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER, 5 January). Sending up a couple of MIGs for reconnaissance was a minimally prudent step on the part of the Libyans.

"The Pentagon claims these MIGs attacked the U.S. planes, which first took 'evasive maneuvers'. But even the NEW YORK TIMES(6 January) printed a diagram of the 'U.S. Pilots' Version' which shows that the first thing the two American fighters did after picking up the Libyan MIGs on radar was to turn 180 degrees and 'head toward them'...And then they quickly dove to a very low altitude, knowing that the MIGs' radar has difficulty detecting planes below them, which gave the F-14s the advantage for an attack..."

-Above passages excerpted from "U.S. HANDS OFF LIBYA," which appears on pp. 1 and 13 of the Jan. 20 WORKERS VANGUARD(New York).

"'It is likewise obvious that in numerous other places in the Old Testament not only in the Book of Proverbs, but also in the Hebrew law, in Job, as we have already noticed in Samuel and Jeremiah, Amenenope's wisdom is the source of ideas, figures, moral standards, and especially certain warm and humane spirit of kindness.'"

-From p. 217 of WHAT THEY NEVER TOLD YOU IN HISTORY CLASS by Indus Khamit Kush.

African Rises To Leadership Of Roman Empire

"Septimus Severus, at the time of his elevation to the throne of the Empire of Rome, was Rome's greatest general, and a former civil magistrate. It is to be further noted that color was never a condition to his ascendency to the Roman throne, as only one Roman Governor had failed to accept this indigenous African's rule of imperial Rome. The dissident was Allinus - Governor of Britany (England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland). But Emperor Septimus Severus quickly did away with this problem, as he defeated and killed Clodius in 197 C.E.(Christian Era) during the Battle of Lyons, France.

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"Septimus Severus' victory over Clodius placed an African('Negro') in complete control of every nation along the Atlantic Ocean* up to, and including, Angloland(Britany)..."

*"During this period the present 'South Atlantic Ocean' was called 'Ethiopian Ocean'...

The 'Ethiopian Ocean' appeared on maps made by European chartists and cartographers until the latter part of the 18th Century C.E...

-From p. 79 of AFRICAN ORIGINS OF THE MAJOR "WESTERN RELIGIONS" by Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan.

African Origin Of Mardi Gras

"Africanisms were apparent not only in the make of musical instruments(such as the banjo. The Senegalese 'bania' has been cited as the root of the word. In its early form as a folk instrument, it was made of a half-gourd resonator covered by animal skin, with a wood or bamboo neck and four strings.) but also in the style of performance and types of ceremonials performed in New Orleans' 'Congo Square'. It was also known as Place Congo because some five or six hundred black persons used to meet at the square on Sunday afternoons to perform and dance. They even formed what they considered to be their tribal groups such as Congos, Fon, Dahomey, and Yoruba. Each tribe had its own chief, drum ensemble, and dance group, which competed socially with those of the other ethnic groups...According to (Caldwell)Titcomb, the first New Orleans Mardi Gras procession was in 1827..."

-From p. 146 of ROOTS OF BLACK MUSIC by Ashenafi Kebede.

Circumcision Traced To Ancient Egypt

"The Egyptians practiced circumcision as early as prehistoric times; they transmitted this practice to the Smitic world in general(Jews and Arabs), especially to those whom Herodotus called Syrians. To show that the Colchians were Egyptians, Herodotus cited these two indications: 'My own conjectures were founded, first, on the fact that

they are black-skinned and have wooly hair, which certainly amounts to but little, since several other nations are so too; but further and more especially, on the circumstance that the Colchians, the Egyptians, and the Ethiopians, are the only nations who have practiced circumcision from the earliest times. The Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine themselves confess that they learnt the custom of the Egyptians; and the Syrians who dwell about the rivers Thermodon and Parthenius, as well as their neighbors the Macronians, say that they have recently adopted it from the Colchians. Now these are the only nations who use circumcision, and it is plain that they all imitate herein the Egyptians'.

"...according to Herodotus, who saw the Egyptians as plainly as the reader is now seeing this book, circumcision is of Egyptian and Ethiopian origin, and the Egyptians and Ethiopians were none other than Negroes inhabiting different regions.

"Thus, we can understand why the Semites practice circumcision despite the fact that their traditions present no valid justification for it. The weakness of the arguments in Genesis is typical: God asks Abraham(and later Moses) to be circumcized, as a sign of a covenant with Him, without explaining how circumcision, considered from the standpoint of Jewish tradition, can lead to the notion of an alliance. This is all the more curious because Abraham was allegedly circumcized at the age of ninety. In Egypt he had married a Negro woman, Hagar, mother of Ishmael, the Biblical ancestor of the second Semitic branch, the Arabs. Ishmael was said to be the historical ancestor of Mohammed. Moses, too, wed a Madianite, and it was in connection with his marriage that the Eternal asked him to be circumcized. What should be noted in these legendary tales is the idea that circumcision was introduced among the Semites only as a result of contact with the Black world--which conforms to the testimony of

Herodotus.

"Only among Blacks does circumcision find an interpretation integrated in a general explanation of the universe, in other words, a cosmogony. Specifically, the Dogon(an ethnic group in the Republic of Mali) cosmogony that Marcel Griaule reports. In DIEU D'EAU, he reminds us that, to make sense, circumcision must be accompanied by excision. These two operations remove something female from the male and something male from the female. To the archaic mentality, such an operation is intended to fortify the dominant character of a single sex in a given human being.

"According to Dogon cosmogony, a newborn baby is to a certain extent androgynous, like the first god: 'So long as it retains its foreskin and clitoris, indications of the sex opposite to the apparent sex, masculinity and femininity have equal strength. Thus it is not accurate to compare the uncircumcized to a woman; like a girl on who excision has not been performed, he is both male and female. If this indecision about his sex were allowed to continue, he(or she) would have no interest in procreation...These,then, are the various reasons for circumcision and excision: the need to rid the child of an evil force, the need for him(or her) to pay a debt of blood and to turn definitely toward one sex' ..."

-From pp. 135 to 137 of THE AFRICAN ORIGIN OF CIVILIZATION: MYTH OR REALITY by Cheik Anta Diop.

Historical Works

-BLACK MAN'S RELIGION and AFRICAN ORIGINS OF THE MAJOR "WESTERN RELIGIONS" by Yosef ben-Jochannan

Available from: Afkebu-Lan Books
209 W. 125th St., Suite #218
N.Y., N.Y. 10027

-THE DESTRUCTION OF BLACK CIVILIZATION by Chancellor Williams

Available from: Third World Press
P.O. Box 730
Chicago, ILL. 60619

-BLACK WOMEN OF ANTIQUITY, edited by Ivan Van-Sertima

Available from: Journal of African Civilizations
Attn: Ivan VanSertima
African Studies Dept.
Beck Hall
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, N.J. 08903

-WHAT THEY NEVER TOLD YOU IN HISTORY CLASS by Indus Khamit Kush

Available from: Nkiru Books
66 St. Mark's Ave.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217

-TWO THOUSAND SEASONS by Ayi Kwei Armah

Available from: Bridges Book Center
1480 Main St.
Rahway, N.J. 07065

Note: TWO THOUSAND SEASONS is, strictly speaking, a fictional account of history but contains truths and insights that are of vital importance.

Announcements

AIM QUARTERLY SPONSORING ESSAY CONTEST - We would like to have your thinking on some problems facing America,--the deficit, the trade imbalance, racism, the situations in the Mideast, South Africa, South America, etc.

Some problems are more complex than others. For example, how much does the practice of racism in America affect Aderica's practice of nternational politics?

Let us have your 800 to 2,000 word essay on any aspect of problems facing America. 1st prize, $100; two 2nd prizes, $50; four 3rd prizes, $25. Deadline: August 15, 1989. Send submission to: AIM QUARTERLY; Essay Contest; Box 20554; Chicago, ILL; 60619.

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION TO HOLD AFRICAN HISTORY PROGRAM - On February 26th, the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization will be holding its annual program of recognition of the richness of the history and heritage of African people. The program will run from 5p.m. to 8 p.m. In addition to the various presentations, there will be refreshments. If you are interested in attending, write to: Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500. Or call 471-3161 and ask for extension 380 or 379. Call between the hours of one and three p.m., Monday through Friday.